1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

881 841 **The Family.** With the advent of puberty the Carib boy and girl enter a period of experimentation and education by experience, which eventually leads to marriage. No rites mark the puberty of boys, but girls on the occasion of their first menstruation are secluded in one corner of the house. A small room is constructed for this purpose, shutting off the rest of the dwelling by partitions of manicol leaves. The girl, during the few days of her confinement there, is allowed to eat only cassava and water. Her hair is bobbed to the level of her ears, and her head and face covered by a cloth. During this time she is advised in an informal way, by her mother and other older female relatives, on female hygiene. She is also advised on the behavior and duties becoming to a wife, although instruction in marital duties is not confined to this time alone. No formal rites of a religious or magical nature are performed at this time. Opportunity is simply taken at this impressive physiological crisis in the girl's life to impress upon her certain facts which all married women should know. The technique of the sexual act is explained in some detail, care of the body during the menstrual period is described, and the restrictions placed upon women at menstrual periods are outlined. A special loin cloth of the usual pattern, but which is worn only during menstruation, is prepared for the girl. The girl is told that during her period a woman is not allowed to eat meat, to prepare food, or to touch a man's hunting implements. She must remain in her hammock, and is allowed only to spin cotton. A man who eats food prepared by a woman during her period will never be well, and bad luck will attend his hunting efforts if a menstruating woman touches his weapons.

836 For several years following puberty the young people of both sexes carry on a certain amount of sexual experimentation. Usually at sprees, when the rules of decorum are somewhat relaxed, the unmarried boys and girls sleep together as a matter of course. They are encouraged by their elders, who compose songs and jokes upon the subject, and arrange to make such activities more or less convenient. [574] A young man visiting a strange settlement is usually provided with an unmarried girl, toward whom he may direct his advances, and, as a part of the social dance which accompanies drinking, all of the women make joking advances to the unattached men. There is sometimes a certain amount of rivalry

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among unmarried girls for the attention of an eligible bachelor on these occasions. A young man between the ages of about fifteen and eighteen makes a point of "going the rounds," attending sprees at as many settlements as he can, and thereby meeting as many eligible girls as possible. His father usually takes a paternal interest in his amorous intrigues, by arranging trips which will enable the young fellow to "see the world." Thus, the average young woman and young man enjoy a series of affairs during their youth. It is rarely that a girl becomes pregnant during this period. The reasons for this I am not sure of, but informants are definite in stating that both contraceptive methods and abortion are used. The opinion seems to be prevalent, however, that an unmarried girl uses these methods infrequently. It is possible, of course, that a certain number of conceptions which might arise from such casual unions are prevented by temporary sterility and by ineptness of technique.

Contraceptive measures may be used by both men and women. They take two forms: bush medicines which may be self-administered, usually as infusions; and ritualistic treatments by the piaiyen.[1] Abortion is induced usually by old women who are skilled in such matters. They administer an infusion of bush herbs to the patient, which is said to induce violent abdominal cramps. Manual assistance is given by kneading the abdomen, and, occasionally, it is said, small sharp sticks are inserted into the vagina "to open the woman up." The latter method is said to produce chronic infertility which can be cured only by the piaiyen. My information on this subject is somewhat indefinite inasmuch as the methods are for the most part in the hands of women and piaiyen, who, when questioned, naturally profess ignorance of the subject. A certain plant, of which I have specimens which have not been identified, is drunk as an infusion by the men, and is said to make "a man run water." It is effective for only a day or two after use. All male informants agreed, often volunteering the information, that contraceptive and abortive methods of one sort or another are in use.

Premarital sexual affairs theoretically take place only between individuals who are eligible to marry, i.e. those who are not siblings or parallel cousins. Incest tabus apply to siblings and parallel

[1] Priest or medicine man.

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a child (1936:76). No adult of reproductive age seems to have remained for long outside of a marriage bond. Extramarital sexual encounters were not uncommon, and adolescents were not prevented from sexual experimentation (1936:72). The separation of sexual partners did not intervene to limit population size.

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Contraceptive measures are reported to have been familiar to both men and women (1936:73). These include "bush medicines" and "ritualistic treatments" performed by a piaiman or shaman. However, the exact species are not identified and their efficacy as well as the incidence of their use are not noted. Old women were reported to have

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been experienced in inducing abortions through the use of an infusion of bush herbs and manual manipulation including the insertion of small, sharp sticks.

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Aside from these behavioral controls, there apparently were physiological factors at work. These are mentioned but their effects cannot be established. Gillin notes, for example, that it was rare for an adolescent girl to become pregnant (1936:73). Regarding this observation, Gillin suggests that temporary sterility and ineptness

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of technique may explain the lack of pregnancies. Also, the incidence of malaria, hook worm, round worm, and other parasites may have contributed to periods of sexual inactivity and temporary sterility as well as affecting the mortality of infants and others.

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In sum, for the 1932-33 period, those behavioral and physiological factors which affected population size were recorded without regard for their situational context. Still, the reproductive results seem clear: i.e., the ratio of adults to children was about one to one in